

EDITORIAL

This editorial is intended to speak for all of us involved in the process of editing the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*. Accordingly, I sent a draft to the new Associate Editors and to the Board of Editors for comment. I have incorporated those comments on which there was some consensus, and offer the following as a communal expression of what JEAB is and should be.

What are the distinctive features of JEAB? A few years ago, that would have been easy to answer: No other journals were giving serious consideration to single-subject research that emphasized environmental events and the contingencies of reinforcement or punishment as determiners of behavior. However, that is no longer true. Several other major journals now publish the sorts of studies that once were almost unique to JEAB, and JEAB has published work based on group designs (albeit with individual data) that would once have gone elsewhere. So now we are distinctive in degree, rather than in kind.

Not long ago, JEAB was alone in publishing parametric, quantitative work on reinforcement schedules. This important line of work remains one of our great strengths, especially in conjunction with the quantitative theoretical papers that have appeared during the last few years. Within the past few years, though, the same sorts of research and theorizing have also appeared elsewhere. To me, this is a healthy sign, but again it reduces JEAB's distinctiveness.

From its inception, JEAB has published many striking demonstrations of new and unexpected phenomena that have been pivotal in changing our thinking about behavior. It is essential that we continue to attract creative work of this kind, even in the absence of parametric analyses or follow-up experiments that isolate the critical variables; otherwise we risk sterility. But surely we have no monopoly on work of this sort.

If JEAB is not unique in publishing single-organism research, parametric analyses, or demonstrations of novel behavioral effects, wherein does its special character reside? The only remaining factor that stands out for me

is the orientation that informs and guides its contributors: namely, that we believe behavior to be orderly, worthy of study in its own right, and open to fruitful experimental analysis. Any piece of work that is guided by this orientation deserves consideration here.

As in the past, the great majority of JEAB pages will be devoted to reports of experimental research. We will also continue to publish theoretical papers, reviews of experimental research, special articles, technical notes, and book reviews, and I encourage authors to submit work in any of these categories. I hope to continue publication of one-page quotations or other short items that are interesting and entertaining for the JEAB audience.

Questions always arise about criteria for publication. First, the systematic significance of the work must be stated clearly. Why is it important? How does it advance our understanding of behavioral processes? Readers have a right to expect that JEAB papers will address issues of general significance and not merely report some factual information about a determiner of behavior, however clear the results.

Second, experimental work must be original in that the data must not have appeared in print previously in this journal or elsewhere. New analyses of old data may be considered as special articles. Theoretical and review articles are likely to depend on old data, but when they contain arguments based on unpublished work, the procedures and data must be presented in sufficient detail to permit evaluation by the reader.

Third, to state the obvious, experimental data must be reliable. The reviewers and editors must be convinced that the findings are sufficiently clear and compelling to merit archival publication. In accordance with long-standing policy, all articles must include individual data. Group averages are never sufficient, although they may be presented to demonstrate trends across subjects or differences between independent groups. In some cases, it may be desirable to provide detailed individual data, including measures of variability. This is especially important if variability

ity itself is related to the various experimental conditions, or if it sheds light on the phenomena being reported. Some results may require the use of inferential statistics to demonstrate reliability, although statistical analysis by itself is unlikely to be persuasive. It is up to the authors to select the most appropriate form of data presentation; the reviewers and editors will not hesitate to express their doubts if the reported effects are not clear.

Fourth, research and theoretical work must be described clearly in a style and language that admit no ambiguity. As far as format goes, JEAB will adhere to the practices outlined in the APA publication manual, but style and usage are not rigidly dictated by journal policy. JEAB has sometimes been accused of having a rigid lexicon of arcane terms, accessible only to the initiate. This is not and should not be true. JEAB does, however, have a history of common usage, and an author departing from that usage runs the risk of being misunderstood. I welcome new ways of naming or describing procedures and results, but only if novel terminology facilitates understanding, is accompanied by careful definition, and is employed consistently. Likewise, I welcome the use of plain English wherever it communicates more effectively than technical language or advances new ways of thinking about behavior for which no technical language is available. Thus, orthodoxy of style

and language are not critical for publication, although reviewers and editors may urge changes to bring a paper into conformity with previous work or to improve communication. Our goal, quite simply, is clarity of communication, both for the present JEAB audience and for unknown audiences in years to come.

Authors often wonder whether JEAB is the appropriate outlet for their work. Prospective contributors should look over some recent volumes to see if their subject falls within areas of current interest to other contributors and readers. However, authors should not feel constrained to submit their work elsewhere if their topics seem somewhat remote from those treated here in the past. Indeed, I believe it is essential that we attract work on topics that have received little attention in this journal, such as taste aversion learning, and in areas that are just now developing, especially in verbal behavior and other complex processes that have tempted some into a cognitive orientation. The experimental analysis of behavior provides an approach to our science that knows few bounds, and we welcome contributions that extend behavioral analyses into new areas. We only insist that the work be good.

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